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TAGS: PREL PGOV IR JO
SUBJECT: A/S HILLEN'S MEETING WITH PRINCE FAISAL

REF: STATE 69112

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DAVID HALE, FOR REASON 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs John Hillen, accompanied by the Ambassador, met May 2 with Prince Faisal, who is King Abdullah's brother. Faisal expressed his appreciation for U.S. support, but stressed Jordan will need continued assistance to face rising oil prices and regional challenges. Prince Faisal welcomed the Antiterrorism Assistance Assessment Team that is scheduled to visit Jordan in early June (reftel).

¶2. (C) A/S Hillen updated Faisal on the USG's assessment of the danger posed by Iran's behavior. Faisal said Iran's greatest strength is that it has influence in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, the Gulf, East Africa, and with Hamas and Hizballah. Faisal speculated that if the U.S. or Israel were to put direct pressure on Tehran the Iranian regime could respond by creating regional "brushfires" that the U.S. and Israel would be forced to deal with. Israel, he said, was the only country in the region with an anti-ballistic missile capability and that if the U.S. or Israel were to strike Iran, Jordan could be exposed to Iranian retaliation. Faisal noted that the governments of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were worried about domestic Shi'a influences, and shared Jordan's concern about the prospect of a Shi'a-dominated and Iranian-influenced Iraq.

HALE